

THE LABOUR ORGANISER

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THE SECRETARY'S PAGE

HELPS AND HINTS IN SEASON.

The Municipal Elections.

The results of the recent Municipal Elections have afforded a theme for rejoicing in most Labour journals. We shall be alone perhaps in looking the gift horse in the mouth, but nevertheless we want to say frankly that the results have not given everything that was expected or everything that ought to have been won. Rejoice as we may and do over the gain of so many Municipal seats and the complete capture of a handful of Borough Councils, the fact remains that not so many seats have been won as last year and in several places we can name the results were disappointing.

In saying this our object is not to give a douche of cold water to those rejoicing over well-earned victories, but to propound certain reasons and causes which can be remedied, and which explain why our advance has not been greater. Last year there is no doubt that the industrial upheaval of the summer months reflected itself in the workers' determination at the polls, to the confounding of Government prophets. This year no such great, and largely extraneous, issues confused the conflict. There was a straight fight on Labour policy, and barring the widespread unemployment and under-employment, the conditions for the Party machine were normal. We have not advanced far enough. Why?

From the observations we are able to make in a fairly extended view of the field we are convinced that except for our fatal weakness in canvassing, and a certain deficiency in technique, Labour knows how to conduct a Municipal election campaign pretty well as much as our opponents do. It is probable that on the whole Labour puts up a better fight Municipally than its opponents. Meetings are good, and enthused; literature is also good and better than our opponents'. Where then is the deficiency?

The deficiency we believe is to be found in most places in a marked inferiority in Labour's polling day arrangements. We have been too often in the thick of it not to remember poignantly the many occasions when Labour's enthusiasm has been night after night in matchless form—crowded meetings, cheering crowds, confidence everywhere. But when the dank morning of the poll dawned Committee Rooms were opened one by one till perhaps toward mid-morning all were opened—and unmanned!

Of course as one visited the Committee Rooms the solitary souls in charge would say things were all right. Our poll would come at night; things were very slow at present; the other side were doing nothing. We were all right here (a fact the counting figures didn't prove) and so on,—all the same old cheery assurances of over-confidence and incapacity. When night came of course fetchers-up would arrive—some for tea (not having earned any) and others after tea to help us talk! A few would do the fetching-up and at 8 o'clock there would be lots of promises never polled.

Now this is not a fancy picture. It is just what has taken place in the past. It is precisely what has taken place in some places this month, and we fancy we can see the guilty blushes of those who know this. The plain truth is that Labour's polling day arrangements are in 90 out of 100 places altogether inferior and insufficiently planned out. We know what it is for the army to appear to be everywhere over night, and for the town next morning to be painted the other colour, with defeat at the end of a painful anti-climax. We are not, on this page, going to deal further with this matter other than to emphasise the vital nature of this question of polling day arrangements, and to say that our other columns for the next few months will deal prominently with the question.

The Agricultural Conferences.

The Party's series of Autumn Agricultural Conferences are now being held in numbers of rural and semi-rural constituencies. Hints as to the organisation of same were sent out by the Head Office with the circulars announcing the campaign and the Conferences all appear to be going well. It will be remembered that the Party desire the Conference meetings to be composed of the rank and file as far as possible, while at the same time a representative character is desired so far as this may be attained. We ourselves believe that no better method of attaining this object has yet been suggested than to ask every Trades Union, Labour, and kindred organisation in the Division to send delegates without limiting the number who may be sent.

In a recent conference, we were concerned with, a fee of sixpence per delegate was fixed with a maximum of 2/6 for any number of delegates up to 20. Emphasis was given to the Party's desire for a rank and file representation and the encouragement given by the reduction in delegation fee if a number was sent directly led to a considerable attendance. After all if one caters for ones and twos the delegation will come that way, and there will be a small and uninspiring Conference. Encourage numbers and create the atmosphere that numbers are wanted and many will come. Incidentally in the Conference we have mentioned no charge was made to the delegates of Trades Union Branches of Agricultural Workers. This seems a desirable concession. Organisers of Agricultural Conferences or of any other for that matter should not forget the vital importance of the second or follow-up circular. A second communication invariably pays for itself and brings in results.

The Organisation of Youth.

Is the Movement neglecting its opportunities for the organisation of youth? We are just a little bit afraid that in most cases this is so. The total number of branches of the Labour Party League of Youth reported to the Blackpool Conference was 229 and it was suggested there that Divisional and Local Labour Parties should seriously consider the establishment of branches of the League of Youth as an integral part of their

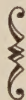
work. The Executive reported that they felt that the development of the League had not been sufficiently widespread to make the calling of a special annual Conference of the League practicable. And certainly in view of the comparatively small number of Parties who have taken up this work the League of Youth can hardly be said to have sufficiently developed as a Party activity requiring special national facilities. It seems rather a pity that the movement as a whole has not yet grasped the huge importance to it of bringing the rising generation into contact either socially or educationally, or both, in order to counteract influences which colour and impregnate every sphere of non-Labour life. Even Parties blessed with their own halls and clubs frequently seem to forget the growing youth in their midst. The maximum age at which members might be admitted to the Guild of Youth was raised by the National Executive last year to 25. This was a wise and useful step which really should have made the development of branches much more rapid.

TWO GOOD HELPS TO ORGANISATION.

Below and on our next two pages we reproduce two excellent organising devices which have recently come to our notice. The Lancaster device is a folded card 6½ ins. by 5 ins. when folded, which is being circulated in the Lancaster Division. It will be noted that collectors have been arranged and that a subscriber to Party funds may pay either weekly, monthly, quarterly or yearly. Stamps have been printed and they are attached to that part of the circular which is retained by the subscriber. The scheme is, of course, the well-known Barrow scheme, but the method adopted to secure subscribers is noteworthy, and worth copying.

The second card we reproduce explains itself. It is a diligent attempt to secure the names of local supporters in South Kensington in order that these persons may be later on canvassed on a systematic plan for the purpose of securing members. The term "Census" is a good one to use and has an attraction about it which should help in the good work.

"Lancaster for Labour."



Many pay lip service to the above slogan, but how many are prepared to make possible its realisation by their personal and financial support?

Believing that in the Lancaster Division there are hundreds who are prepared to do their part in winning Lancaster for Labour, we make this appeal with the fullest confidence.

Any individual who has given the matter a moment's thought knows that to achieve success, a strong organisation must be built up and propaganda work done, in a variety of ways, so as to insure that before the next General Election takes place every elector will be familiar with our programme.

This cannot be done effectively unless our income is greatly increased. The Liberal and Tory parties are financed by rich men; we depend entirely upon the coppers of the workers.

It is the **Democrats' Pence against the Plutocrats' Pounds.**

The Capitalist parties will supply you with *their* politics for nothing, which represents exactly what they are worth. In the Labour Party you are asked to pay for *your* politics.

The Anti-Trade Union Bill which has recently been passed is but a mean attempt to cripple the Labour movement on every field. We are determined that it shall not succeed in its object, but that it shall spur us on to further effort.

Our cause is worth living for, working for, and worth paying for, therefore the Committee of the Divisional Labour Party appeal to all in sympathy with us to assist by all means at their disposal in the building up of an organisation in this Division, which to us will be a source of pride, and to others an object of envy.

Signed on behalf of the Committee,

F. W. TAYLOR, J.P. (*President*).

A. P. DERRICK (*Secretary*).

A. KNOWLES (*Financial Secretary*).

If you desire to help please fill in form below:

Names

.....

.....

Address

.....

Amount of your contribution—*per week*

Or, if you prefer so to pay—*per month*

” ” —*per quarter*

” ” —*per year*

NOTE.—

Our Collector will call at Your convenience.

May we suggest that every member of your household is given the opportunity to help.

REMEMBER! NO SUM IS TOO SMALL

PERFORATION.

IMPORTANT.

For every payment made you will receive stamps to that amount, attach same in spaces provided.

----- PERFORATION. -----

ARTHUR KNOWLES,

56 Wingate-Saul Road,

LANCASTER.

SOUTH KENSINGTON

DIVISIONAL

LABOUR PARTY.

Electoral Census.

The Council of the above appeal to YOU and to all voters and residents in South Kensington who are anxious to help in securing the election of Labour Representatives to local Public Bodies and to Parliament, to assist them in the following manner :—

Write the names and addresses of neighbours, friends, fellow workers, etc. (men and women whom you have good reason to believe will vote for Labour Candidates) on the enclosed Census Canvass Card and return it as soon as possible to the address printed on the face of the card.

The Council thank you in anticipation, and will be pleased to supply you or any other friends with additional Cards.

RICHARD MONTFORD,
Divisional Organiser.

19, Warwick Road, S.W.5.

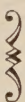
----- PERFORATION. -----

South Kensington

Divisional

Labour Party.

ENSUS
CANVASS
CARD



INSTRUCTIONS.

This Card, when completed, should be returned immediately to the office of the Divisional Organiser,

19, WARWICK ROAD, EARLS COURT, S.W.5.

Personal attendance is given, enquiries answered, and Census Canvass Cards issued and collected, on **Tuesdays** and **Thursdays**, from 2 till 10 p.m.

No.....

SOUTH KENSINGTON LABOUR ELECTORAL CENSUS.

Names and Addresses of Men and Women who will vote for Labour Candidates at forthcoming Elections.

Reg. No. (To be left blank)	Sex M or F	NAME IN FULL	ADDRESS.
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

THE LAYMAN'S GUIDE TO THE FRANCHISE.

BY THE EDITOR.

ARTICLE II.—THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT FRANCHISE (MEN.)

(The object of the following series of articles is to provide the ordinary Labour worker or ward and polling district official with a simple and authoritative statement of the law concerning the Franchise.)

Article II. (Continued).

Note 9. THE LODGER VOTE. Proviso 2 of Section 3 lays down what is known as the lodger vote and my readers will remember that we are now dealing solely with the Local Government Franchise. There is no lodger vote for Parliamentary purposes, because residence or business occupation is the prime qualification there,—not occupation “as owner or tenant” as in the case of the Local Government Franchise.

By the proviso under discussion the meaning of the word “tenant” is extended to include a person who occupies a room or rooms as a lodger where such premises are let to him in an unfurnished state. The lodger of course must fulfil all the other necessary qualifications as to the qualifying period, age, etc. The successive qualification applies to a lodger equally to any other qualified person, and the lodgings therefore may not necessarily be the same lodgings during the whole period of qualification nor indeed is there anything to prevent the qualifying period being made up partly by occupation as owner or tenant of land or premises and partly by lodgings. This is important because cases frequently happen of lodgers going into new houses during the qualifying period or occasionally of persons giving up houses and going into lodgings.

No question of rateable value or any other value arises with the lodger vote.

There is a difference in the requirements as to residence between the service voter and the lodger voter. The service voter must “inhabit,” the lodger voter must “occupy.” “Sleeping-in” is not a necessity for the lodger vote and unfurnished rooms may qualify entirely without physical residence.

A practical difficulty in many lodger claims is the fact that rooms are let not entirely furnished. We submit that floor cloth, fire guards and possibly certain other articles do not convert an unfurnished room into a furnished one, but where tables, chairs, dressers and similar furniture is provided then un-

doubtedly the room is not unfurnished. Frequently, the difficulty is got over by the rooms being let unfurnished for a stipulated figure, and a separate rental paid for the hire of furniture.

Let us note that a person who rents a furnished house as tenant is not a lodger notwithstanding that he uses the furniture. Much depends upon his agreement, but in most cases he is a tenant for his period of tenancy with a definite “estate” in the premises occupied. In the case of furnished tenements the principal difficulty that will always confront one is to draw the line between the bona fide “tenant” of part of a house and a “lodger.” As to what is a tenant and who is a lodger one cannot do better than quote the elaborate statement of the position laid down in Mackenzie and Lushington’s Registration Manual.

“The difficulty in distinguishing the lodger from the inhabitant occupier as tenant of part of a house arises from the fact that the part of a dwelling house may be of exactly the same character in all respects with regard to each; and that the legal relation between landlord and lodger, and landlord and tenant (that is, tenant in the legal sense) may be created in each case by words only, and not by any particular formal words, so long as they are sufficient to explain the intent of the parties. In every case you must get back to the facts of the agreement between the persons actually using the rooms and the person who receives for his own benefit the money paid for the use of them. If the agreement is that the one is to have the use of the rooms, subject to the general power of control and dominion of the house by the other, then the case is one of landlord and lodger. If the agreement is that the one is to have the rooms absolutely free from the control or interference of the other, then the case is one of landlord and tenant. The results of the difference in the nature of the right are very various, and frequently, as a matter of practice, the nature of the right intended to be created can be judged by the consequences. For instance, a tenant

occupier is rateable because he has an exclusive right of property in the tenement, but a lodger is not rateable because he has no such right. At the same time the mere fact that a person who is a lodger has claimed to be rated does not prove him to be a tenant occupier. A tenant occupier, unless expressly restrained by the terms of the contract, can dispose of his interest in the premises, and the landlord cannot turn out his assignee except for breach of such of the terms of the original letting as by law bind the assignee. But a lodger cannot force the landlord to accept some other person in his room who is willing to pay the rent and observe the terms of the original contract. A tenant may maintain an action of trespass or ejectment against a stranger, but a lodger cannot recover against a stranger merely for intruding upon his privacy. A tenant might justify using sufficient force to eject a trespasser, a lodger could not justify turning out an intruder. A tenant might have an action of trespass or ejectment against his landlord, unless the entry of the landlord was under some express reservation in the original contract, and did not exceed the limits of that reservation. But a lodger could not complain if his landlord, even without any express stipulation in the original contract, entered his rooms in order to put out a stranger making a disturbance, or for any reasonable exercise of control over what remains the landlord's house, notwithstanding the contract. Even if the landlord turned the lodger out without notice and for no good reason, the only remedy of the lodger would be in damages, and not to recover possession.

There must, therefore, be in all cases a contract creating a personal relation between the landlord and the lodger, but not passing any right of property in the premises to the lodger."

Though we have quoted the above authority, rarely now invoked, it is necessary to point out that the difference between a tenant of part of a house and a lodger in a house, becomes in practice, of importance only, in the case of the furnished tenements above-mentioned. A tenant of a part of a house, though furnished, is still a tenant within the meaning of the Act. A lodger in furnished rooms is not.

AGENCY CHANGES AND NEW APPOINTMENTS.

East Grinstead. Mr. J. T. Baxter has been appointed to the vacancy at East Grinstead. Present address: 218 North Street, Hugglescote, Leicester.

Wandsworth, Balham and Tooting. Mr. George Coppuck has now ceased as agent in this constituency.

South Poplar. (Change of Address.) Councillor George J. Cressall, J.P., Labour Agent, now 15 Macquarie Way, Millwall, London, E. 14.

Stepney, Whitechapel. Labour Agent: Mr. J. Sullivan, 31 Great Prescott Street, London E. 1. Mr. Sullivan's name was omitted from our previously published list.

Rossendale. Mr. W. Regan is now ceasing in this constituency.

Warrington. (Change of address.) Mr. G. Hindle, Labour Agent, now 52 Church Street, Warrington.

Maidstone. (Change of address.) Mr. James D. A. Law, Labour Agent, now 2 Hackney Road, Maidstone, Kent.

Lewes. (Change of Address.) Mr. C. E. Tritton, Labour Agent, now Shepherd's Corner, Goat Lane, Ringmer, Lewes, Sussex.

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FROM THE OLD ARMCHAIR,
THE EDITOR'S OFFICE,
November, 1927.

BEFORE me at this moment lie four letters. Four very touching letters and all on the same theme. The trouble this time is the candidates, and if I believed every word that is in those four letters I should imagine that something suddenly has gone wrong with candidates as a whole, and that we should win elections more easily without them.

I have listened on many occasions, suffering more or less gladly, while a candidate has poured out his troubles concerning his Party, his agent, his constituency, his Executive, his Union, his finance, his health and all manner of other troubles, and I have sympathised and consoled, inwardly wondering what would happen if candidates and constituencies could only sometimes tell each other openly what they thought of one another. Equally I have listened to agents and Executives, workers and shirkers, telling me with more readiness than restraint just what their second thoughts were about the choice they had made.

One wonders sometimes whether candidates and constituencies live in different worlds. Perhaps there is just a grain of truth in this remark. Each ought to understand the other's world a little better. The ideal candidate was never born; the ideal constituency has yet to evolve. I once had a candidate who was as near the ideal as a man could be in that capacity. Unassuming, hard working, considerate, attached to his constituency, living in it, a giant on the platform, a power with his pen, and one who worked as a brother Socialist should work. His views were my views point to point throughout the gamut of Labour policies. He platformed while I organised. His workers bore him a deep affection and he in turn was filled with that love for humanity which

makes a man a power while yet he himself never seeks it. But I was lucky. Others have said the same thing at different times about their candidates, and so it does seem that sometimes an agent and a candidate can get so close that almost ideal working is possible.

But while this is so of individuals as regards constituencies it is a different matter. Constituencies have all the faults and frailties of women, plus all the vices and malignity of men. They have little of the virtues of either sex. Fickle, jealous, exacting, greedy and critical, these are the attributes of most constituencies, and they are the handicaps the candidate has to fight against when he starts his wooing. Really he needs to be something of an angel if he is to suit all parties and keep out of hot water.

But a constituency never sees itself in this light. Readers will deny my soft impeachment and stop their subscriptions. But what is the record of the majority of constituencies in regard to their affections? Fickle they have certainly been, as hundreds who have wooed, and won, only to lose again, will testify. And if one wants to know how jealous they can be let their candidate or member talk of contesting elsewhere. I remember a storm that burst in Lancashire many years ago when a prominent Socialist M.P. thought of contesting a Birmingham seat. History may have been altered had he done so, but jealousy kept him away.

And who can deny that constituencies, most constituencies, are exacting in their demands for speeches and attendances, sometimes even for residences, and nearly always for money and other sacrifices. As for being greedy the line between exaction and greediness is very difficult to define. If one brought into the picture all the money and material aid in the past demanded of candidates it would be hard to rebut the charge.

And who is going to say that constituencies are not critical? My four letters alone prove the contrary; so does a candidate's and member's own post bag, not to mention the minutes of his Party! Perhaps it is as well that constituencies are critical, but if that is so why argue about it?

So much then for constituencies. Let me sharpen my knife for the candidates. I mean the average candidate as disclosed by my four correspondents and multitudinous other critics, not of course including my pet candidate named above.

Now candidates have two lives. There is the period before their selection—a sort of nascent period—and there is their Hereafter in the constituencies. The candidate will tell you that this is his period of torment and perhaps there is something in it. But I am wanting in this paragraph to turn the searchlight on these fellows and uncover something of what my correspondents tell me.

Of course candidates are vain, self-seeking, imperious, tricky, hypocritical and on the make. They don't tell everything about themselves when they come to the selection meeting. Dear me, no! The skeleton in the cupboard has to be dragged out by the other side, and when the rumour goes round that the skeleton is there, of course, we all believe it. Some candidates, too, are poor speakers; others talk too much. Some candidates never visit the constituency after they are selected; and others cut and come again till they make themselves too cheap. Some candidates have wives, poor men! and these ladies are divine till a squabble starts among the women; other candidates are bachelors and *they* can never be right anyway. Some candidates stay at hotels and of course are hobnobbing with the aristocracy; other candidates stay with Tom, Dick or Harry, and naturally make everybody else jealous. Some candidates belong to the right wing, and the left calls a general strike. Some candidates swing out with a left lead and promptly we lose the middle-class vote. And so on and so forth! Candidates are bad, and there is no health in them.

I sometimes think the relationship of a candidate to his constituency is comparable with the marriage state. To begin with there is usually a little coyness on both sides before the engage-

ment. And the eternal triangle is not a thing unknown. Another lover comes in sight and the fickle Party, or at any rate a fickle section of it, wants a change. If this doesn't happen the more or less even tenor of courtship takes its place before the candidate gets wedded to his constituency as a result of his election. There are courtship differences, naturally, but as these get settled in courtship life, why not when courting a constituency? The evil is when men and women in the party begin to alter their minds about the candidate or *vice versa*. Courtship is intimate, and a candidate and constituency ought to frequently meet and like each other better for the contact. But courtship that begins too strong generally doesn't last out. Therefore, candidates, please take a hint!

Now there is a difference between the courtships of 1927 and those of 1887. The modern young lady is made of sterner stuff than her Victorian auntie. She speaks her mind and likes to pay her share. Why not? After all a candidate should not object to reasonable criticism and neither must a Party object to being told its faults. But these happenings should not develop into tiffs. They are the operation of mutual modification which courtship effects or should effect on both parties. And as for the lady paying, that is a modern custom and long may it live! We have, I hope, left the day behind when candidates were expected to foot every bill, and perhaps the day will arrive when the lady meaning the constituency will always pay the major burden. A constituency ought to anticipate the coming day.

So much then for candidates. Now for the members. Being wedded, one pities them most. The married life of a member and a constituency may be one long story of squalls and showers with divorce and dissolution at the end of it; or it may rival the married bliss of Darby and Joan and live through successive perils till the High Power itself dissolves the bonds.

What will help to keep the married state as I have last described it? If I may sum it up in a few words I would revert to the heading of this page. Each must exercise **PHILOSOPHY, TACT, DISCRETION, WISDOM, PRUDENCE, VISION, TOLERANCE, AFFECTION**. We should never lose any seats!

“

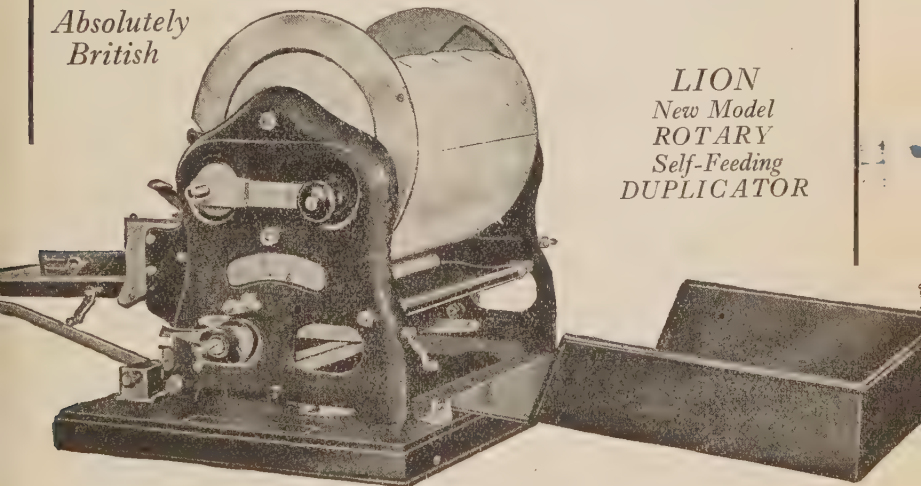
“I am more than satisfied with the machine,—it is simple, efficient, clean and singularly attractive . . .

“The machine was recommended to me by Cr. —, the Labour Party Agent at — and I shall certainly ‘pass on the good news’ whenever opportunity serves.

. . . I am only anxious that my fellow Agents should know of your machine.”

(Excerpts from letter received from a Labour Party Agent.)

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Candidates and members like other workers and officers in the Labour Movement are mainly moved by the desire for service to the Cause, and the wish to serve it in the capacity most suited to their talents. Not every man is qualified to be a candidate, nor is every man qualified to be the chairman of his branch. Local parties in the Labour Party have every opportunity to know before hand whether their candidate is suited in all respects for the task he essays to undertake. The doubter should express his doubts at that time or ever after hold his peace. We are well aware that sometimes on further acquaintance the high ideals originally formed fail to find fulfilment. The moral is not to expect that every candidate is a super-man, and to recognise that candidates in most cases are entering upon a new, and to them, unexplored field full of work and worry and pitfalls. He will be a clever candidate, far too clever for most of us, who never makes mistakes. It is up to Labour Parties to frankly recognise the difficulties of candidatures and to help and counsel rather than carp and chide.

And there are obligations which a member or a candidate bears to his constituency and to his Party. His complaint usually is that the Party doesn't move fast enough. It doesn't organise sufficiently or keep the machine in the perfect condition the candidate or member desires. Well, a constituency is often what a candidate makes it. If the head is fed and the body is neglected the structure will wither right enough. It is the candidate's place to nurture and to feed, not only the central organisation of the Party, but its local parts. To do this means speeches and attendances in the localities, in the wards and polling districts, and visitations carried out under local auspices as well as central auspices. The candidate must keep his policy always well to the fore on every public question as a lamp lighting up the dark places, but he should also not forget the material things in the way of knowing his Party, and his people; of taking part in their social life, and becoming if he can the big brother to all his constituency. It is a big task to fulfil, but men will do it if the Movement exercises tolerance and tact, and flavours its criticism with affection.

LAW AND PRACTICE.

[Under this heading are found brief and chatty explanations of points of commoner interest concerning the Law and Practice of Elections. Readers are invited to suggest points for notice herein, but are reminded that suggestions made may not necessarily be dealt with in the next issue.—ED.]

"The Agent" in Local Elections.

The recent Municipal Elections produced quite a crop of inquiries relative to the position of an election agent at these elections. The matter is not without some difficulty, and as the position regarding agents is the same for County Council, Urban, Rural, District Council and Guardian's elections, as in Municipal Elections, we think it well to set out clearly the state of the law in this matter.

In regard to Parliamentary Elections successive enactments have made the position of the election agent quite clear. He is by law the supreme business head of an election. His powers, functions and responsibilities are clearly laid down and no person may trespass on his authority. He is publicly recognised, and the Returning Officer and everyone else concerned must treat with him on specified matters and with no one else.

Now the position in Municipal Elections is fundamentally different. In not one single Act relating to Municipal Elections, or in any Act applied to them, is there any mention of a paid election agent. The term nowhere occurs and furthermore the employment of a paid election agent is clearly an illegal employment under Section 13 of the Municipal Elections Corrupt and Illegal Practices Act, 1884, which reads as follows:—

"No person shall, for the purpose of promoting or procuring the election of a candidate at a municipal election, be engaged or employed for payment or promise of payment for any purpose or in any capacity whatever, except as follows (that is to say)

A number of persons may be employed, not exceeding two for a borough or ward, and if the number of electors in such borough or ward exceeds two thousand an additional person may be employed for every thousand electors and incomplete part of a thousand electors over and above the said two thousand, and such

persons may be employed as clerks and messengers, or in either capacity; and

One polling agent may be employed in each polling station:

Provided that this section shall not apply to any engagement or employment for carrying into effect a contract bona fide made with any person in the ordinary course of business.

Subject to such exception as may be allowed in pursuance of this Act, if any person is engaged or employed in contravention of this section, either before, during, or after an election, the person engaging or employing him shall be guilty of illegal employment, and the person so engaged or employed shall also be guilty of illegal employment, if he knew that he was engaged or employed in contravention of this Act."

The Municipal Corporations Act, 1882, contains in Section 58 (6) an ambiguous clause which is generally taken to sanction the employment of an election agent *without* payment. The clause reads:—

"Nothing in the Ballot Act, 1872, as applied by this Act, shall be deemed to authorise the appointment of any agents of a candidate at a municipal election: but if, in the case of a municipal election, an agent of a candidate is appointed, and notice in writing of the appointment is given to the returning officer, one clear day before the polling day, then the provisions of the Ballot Act, 1872, with respect to agents of candidates, shall, as far as regards that agent, apply in the case of that election."

It will be seen that the above reading is by no means happy or distinct. "If . . . an agent of a candidate is appointed," no specific powers are given to him nor is any definite recognition ordained. Merely the provisions of the Ballot Act with respect to agents of candidates are to apply to him. And the Ballot Act makes no mention of election agents! nor is an agent of a candidate necessarily an election agent. The Sections of the Ballot Act which apply to agents of candidates are summarised at the foot of this article in an adaptation we have made from Arnold's Law of Municipal Corporations. What the Section really amounts to is that an agent *may* be appointed by the

Candidate, but he has only the powers of either a polling agent or a counting agent. And because of the absence of any instruction to the Returning Officer to recognise an agent in any other capacity one finds that the Returning Officer may and usually does refuse to recognise "the agent" who has not also been appointed by the candidate as a polling agent or counting agent; and he, the returning officer, recognises the agent in those capacities only.

Fortunately, for the efficient conduct of elections there are a number of Town Clerks who recognise election agents in the same way as in Parliamentary Elections, and who extend to the agents much the same facilities. But this cannot be counted upon and in all local Government Elections it is essential to remember that if a person is appointed to take charge of the elections he has practically no legal locus standi, and his office must be fortified by certain other steps. To attend at the objections he must be appointed the candidate's "representative" (a candidate and one "representative" only are "allowed in" at objections). To get into the polling stations he must be appointed as a polling agent, and to get into the count he must be appointed as a counting agent. Further, in those Local Government Elections where a return of expenses is required, it is the candidate and not any agent who makes the return.

Of course the practice of appointing one person to take charge of a particular election, or the whole of the elections in any area is a convenient one, and makes for efficiency and economy. In our opinion it is a desirable practice. But as payment cannot be made to a person as election agent payment can only be arranged by the agent also holding an appointment as clerk, messenger or polling agent in which capacities only it is permissible to make payment. It is desirable to hold a definite appointment from the candidate for one of these offices. Usually the agent is chief clerk.

The following is a summary of the powers and duties of candidates' agents which we have, with slight modifications, taken from Arnold's Law of Municipal Corporations:—

"Rule 21 of the First Schedule of the Ballot Act, 1872, gives the polling agents of the candidates a right to be present in the polling station.

By Rule 26 of the same Schedule votes directed to be marked by the presiding officer must be marked in the presence of the polling agents.

A polling agent may require the presiding officer to put the prescribed questions to voters (s. 59 (1), ante, p. 81).

By Rule 29 of the First Schedule of the Ballot Act(1872, the presiding officer is to make up the packets mentioned therein in the polling agents' presence, and they may affix their seals thereto.

By Rule 31 of the same statute, the candidates may appoint agents to attend the counting.

Rule 32 of the same Schedule entitles such agents to written notice of the time and place appointed for the counting.

By Rule 34 of the same Schedule the ballot boxes must be opened in the presence of the counting agents.

By Rule 35 of the same Schedule the counting agents may affix their seals upon the ballot papers and other documents during any interval in the counting.

By Rule 36 of the same Schedule a counting agent may object to the rejection by the returning officer of any ballot paper.

By Rule 37 of the same Schedule the ballot paper accounts must be verified in the counting agents' presence, and the agents may copy the returning officer's report.

By Rule 51 of the same Schedule an agent (either polling or counting) may be assisted by his principal and his duties may be performed by the principal.

By Rule 52 the name and address of every agent of a candidate appointed to attend the counting of the votes shall be transmitted to the returning officer one clear day at least before the opening of the poll, and the returning officer may refuse to admit to the place where the votes are counted any agent whose name and address has not been so transmitted, notwithstanding that his appointment may be otherwise valid.

By Rule 53 if any person appointed an agent by a candidate for the purpose of attending at the polling station, or at the counting of the votes, dies or becomes incapable of acting during the time of the election, the candidate may appoint another agent in his place, and shall forthwith give to the returning officer notice in writing of the name and address of the agent so appointed.

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ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Correspondents are required to give their full name and address, not, however, necessarily for publication. Replies from general correspondents cannot be given through the post. It is imperative that where a reply depends on a statement of fact (such, for instance, as qualification of an elector to be on the register), the fullest information should be given.

Inspecting an Opponent's Expenses.

Question. What procedure would you adopt to inspect an opponent's election expenses?

Answer. By Section 21 (10) of the Municipal Election Corrupt and Illegal Practices Act, 1884, it is enacted that "the return and declarations sent in pursuance of this Act to the Town Clerk shall be kept at his office and shall be at all reasonable times during the 12 months next after they are received by him be open to inspection by any person on payment of the fee of one shilling and the Town Clerk shall on demand furnish copies thereof or of any part thereof at the price of twopence for every 72 words."

An Undertaker's Vehicles.

Question. Can a candidate who happens to be a Funeral Undertaker use the motor vehicles, generally in use for conveying mourners to the graveside, for the purpose of conveying electors to the Poll? Can the owner of Hackney Carriages (used for private hire) loan same to a candidate for conveying electors to the Poll? Can a candidate hire vehicle mentioned for the purpose of conveying electors to the Poll?

Answer. All these questions can be answered by a reference to the Municipal Elections Corrupt and Illegal Practices Act, 1884. Section 4 (1) says:—

"No payment or contract for payment shall for the purposes of promoting or procuring the election of a candidate at a Municipal Election be made on account of the conveyance of electors to or from the poll, whether for the hiring of horses or carriages or for railway fares or otherwise."

Section 10 (1) says:—

"A person shall not let, lend, or employ for the purpose of the conveyance of electors to or from the poll

at a municipal election, any public stage or hackney carriage, or any horse or other animal kept or used for drawing the same or any carriage, horse, or other animal which he keeps or uses for the purpose of letting out for hire, and if he lets, lends or employs such carriage, horse, or other animal knowing that it is intended to be used for the purposes of the conveyance of electors to or from the poll, he shall be guilty of illegal hiring.

"A person shall not hire, borrow, or use for the purpose of the conveyance of electors to or from the poll any carriage, horse, or other animal which he knows the owner thereof is prohibited by this section to let, lend or employ for that purpose, and if he does so he shall be guilty of illegal hiring.

"Nothing in this Act shall prevent a carriage, horse, or other animal being let to or hired, employed, or used by an elector, or several electors at their joint cost, for the purpose of conveying him or them to or from the poll.

"No person shall be liable to pay any duty or to take out a licence for any carriage by reason only of such carriage being used without payment or promise of payment for the conveyance of electors to or from the poll at an election."

Imprint on Municipal Literature.

Question. Is it legal to have the agent's name on the imprint as publisher so far as the Election Address is concerned, as per enclosed sample? (a municipal leaflet.—Ed.) Is it legal to have the agent's name on the imprint as published so far as Guardians elections are concerned?

Answer. In this question our correspondent asks whether the "Agent's" name should appear on the imprint as publisher. As to the right to employ an agent in a Local Government Election our correspondent is referred to the article on that matter which appears in another part of this issue. The candidate in a Municipal Election may authorise any person to do a particular thing, and whoever the person may be who has published any matter it should be his name which should appear on the imprint as publisher. In our questioner's case the agent was apparently

the authorised person and it is proper that his name should appear on the imprint. This applies to either a Municipal or a Guardians election, but the whole of our answer does not apply to a Parliamentary election.

Section 14 of the Municipal Elections Corrupt and Illegal Practices Act, 1884, reads:—

"Every bill, placard, or poster having reference to a municipal election, shall bear upon the face thereof the name and address of the printer and publisher thereof; and any person printing, publishing or posting, or causing to be printed, published, or posted, any such bill, placard, or poster as aforesaid, which fails to bear upon the face thereof the name and address of the printer and publisher, shall, if he is a candidate, be guilty of an illegal practice, and if he is not the candidate, shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding one hundred pounds."

Unfurnished Rooms.

Question. At the last Registration Court, I placed forward a large number of claims for Municipal votes on the "Unfurnished Room" claim.

Although I was successful in the majority of these claims, the Registration Officer laid it down at the Court, that "unfurnished rooms" were not "premises" within the meaning of the Act, and that in future, all such claims must be accompanied by the value and assessment of the room claimed for.

I am of the opinion that the ruling in these cases is wrong and I am desirous of contesting the ruling of the Registration Officer, but want to be sure of my ground before doing so.

Will you please let me have your valued opinion on the cases mentioned above, in respect to the correctness, or otherwise of the ruling given.

Answer. It is difficult to imagine a more stupid quibble than the one mentioned by our correspondent as being put forward by his Registration Officer.

Section 3 of the R.P. Act, 1918, first clearly gives the right to be registered to a person fulfilling certain conditions and "occupying as owner or tenant any land or premises." The section then goes on to say that "for the purposes of this section the word tenant shall include a person who occupies a room or rooms as a lodger only where such room

or rooms are let to him in an unfurnished state."

Obviously, if unfurnished rooms are not "premises" within the meaning of that section then not only are the words just quoted altogether meaningless but there can be no such thing as a lodger vote. The contention of the Returning Officer strikes us as being a ludicrous and idiotic quibble which would be laughed out of Court if an appeal was made on any claim rejected by him on the grounds stated.

We advise our correspondent to await his time till next Revision Court and appeal to the County Court on his lodger claims should this course prove necessary.

Personation and a Petition.

Question. On the 1st November our candidate lost by a majority of 1 for the Tory Party after a recount. We are not satisfied with the result as we know of cases of impersonation. There are at present nearly 30 names of known Tory voters on the register that are dead. Can we demand to see the Returning Officer's registers to ascertain if any of these people have been voted for? Our people in this ward are desirous of proving that the Tory got in by unfair methods; none of our own dead folks or absent folks were voted for.

Answer. Our friends can only proceed to question the result of the election by means of a petition. The petition may be either for a simple recount and scrutiny or corrupt and illegal practices may be alleged.

We are unable to advise our correspondent to enter on the cost of an election petition. A petition is not likely to cost less than £100—it may cost more and in any case legal assistance is necessary. On no account should any steps be taken in this direction without consultation with the Head Office of the Labour Party. Our friends must further be quite definite in any charges made against opponents. A scrutiny would disclose whether or no dead men have been polled, but unless there is some very definite information concerning certain names on the register a scrutiny after the recount that has taken place could not be much more than a gamble. Even if it succeeded there is invariably an odium attaching to the persons who lodge a petition. If cases of personation can be brought home to our opponents it is probable the

seat could be declared vacant on these grounds, but even so there is many a slip twixt the cup and the lip. The best course with impersonation is to prosecute them when evidence has been secured.

As a further item of advice we suggest that in view of the suspicions that our friends hold it would be well on the next occasion to place agents in the polling booths. Such agents should possess ready marked registers concerning the dead or known absentees and prompt action can be taken whenever an offence appears about to be committed.

Engine-drivers as Absent Voters.

QUESTION.—Two of our members—a locomotive engine driver and his fireman—(L.N.E.R.) claimed to be included on the absent voters' list on the ground that owing to their occupation there is a probability that they will be debarred from voting at parliamentary elections. They received no intimation from the Registration Officer that they were to appear at the Revision Court nor were any enquiries made of them by his officers.

At the Court he asked me if I could give him any details of these claims. I reminded him that they were the men's own claims, but in order to help him I gave him what I told him I *thought* were their working duties. This satisfied me that there was every probability, but he ruled otherwise and disallowed the claims. On the men's behalf I have since furnished him with their actual working schedule (copy of which I enclose), from which it was obvious to him that out of every 12 working days it would be quite impossible for them to exercise their votes at Ipswich on 6 of such days. He then excused himself on the ground that such details should have been furnished on Claim Form R.P. 27, whereas they stated merely "Engine-driver L.N.E.R."

I should be glad of your opinion upon the action of the Registration Officer, and if you endorse it, what steps we ought to take to get Form R.P. 27 revised so that it should clearly intimate to claimants that they must give these fuller details as requested by the Officer.

ANSWER.—We fear the Registration Officer is wrong throughout in his treatment of the claims mentioned. In the first place the Registration Officer has

neglected his duties in failing to give notice to the claimant of the time and place at which his claim would be considered. The registration rules at present in force read:—

"The registration officer shall also consider all claims of which notice is given to him in accordance with these rules, and in respect of which no notice of objection is given, and, if he considers that the claim may be allowed without further inquiry, shall give notice to the claimant that his claim is allowed.

If the registration officer is not satisfied that any such claim can be allowed without inquiry, he shall give at least five clear days' notice to the claimant of the time and place at which the claim will be considered by him."

If the registration officer was dissatisfied when this claim was considered he should clearly have issued 5 days notice to the claimant so that the latter could be heard and his claim amplified.

It is sheer rubbish for the registration officer after so obviously failing in his duty to suggest that the claimant ought to have amplified his claim on form R.P. 27. The claim form R.P. 27 is prescribed by Statutory Rules and Orders and the sole matter a claimant is required to declare is "that there is a probability that owing to my occupation—service—employment as . . . I shall be debarred from voting, etc." There is not the slightest hint on the claim form that a claimant should go further and state how and why he is debarred other than by the mere fact of his occupation. The form too strictly follows the wording of the Act itself which requires no more than "That any person . . . may . . . claim to be placed on the Absent Voter's List; and the registration officer if satisfied that there is a probability that the claimant by reason of the nature of his occupation, service or employment may be debarred from voting at a poll at a Parliamentary Election held during the time the register is in force shall place the claimant . . . on the Absent Voters List."

If the registration officer is not satisfied his course is laid down in the Rule 21 quoted above.

It is, of course, too late to make any appeal against the registration officer now, but his irregular action should not pass unchallenged and his attention might privately be called to the regulations.

ORGANISING SELECTION CONFERENCES.

We have received the following interesting matter from Mr. L. Straw, Labour Agent, South Derbyshire Division. Mr. Straw has already been commended for the admirable form in which his selection conference was organised:—

I was very interested in your article in the current month's "Organiser" on Selection Conferences, and I wondered if my last experience in arranging for this important piece of work in connection with our duties, would be of any use to you. I hope the matter submitted will recommend itself. My general advice on this matter of selecting a candidate, is to take this business in time and give plenty of time to it. Study the constitution in regard to its bearing upon all points concerned, and pay minute attention to all the details of the business right through. Making sure of detail is the application of foresight to business, and proper foresight in regard to this, as indeed to all our work, ensures smooth running of the machine, and smoothness is 95 per cent. success.

The first point is to invite nominations. I used two forms for this purpose, and allowed about eight weeks for returns. The forms will explain themselves, and I think, cover all points in regard to this important part of the business. In regard to inviting nominations, I would advise that the Divisional E.C. should not lose sight of the important point, that itself can nominate, obeying, of course, the same regulations as all other component parts of the Party.

The next point is getting your nominees before the members of your Party. The selection conference fills the bill so far as the constitution is concerned. However, we took the step of giving every nominee a chance to address public meetings at various strategic points in the constituency. This, I think, is called for, where you have an E.C. nominee in the running. It tends to counteract the weight of official backing. Incidentally, it means propaganda, which can be made to pay.

It will be noted that the form inviting nominations, contains the date of the Conference. That, I think, is a detail very well worth while.

With regard to the Conference itself, I consider the following details extremely important. (1) The issue of

credentials. With regard to this I sent all credentials direct to each delegate, after having, of course got their names and addresses from the various secretaries. I prepared a credential register, which contained (a) the number of each credential, (b) the name of each delegate and the society he represented; and it was sub-divided to show at a glance Trade Union delegates, or Polling District Committee, Delegates, etc. Credential clerks were appointed and the attendance of each delegate was checked, while a report of this register was one of the items on the Conference agenda. This gave every delegate a chance of checking the returns of the ballots. The register contained instructions to the clerks as to the mode of checking, etc. Then comes the extremely important details relative to the order of business. This took the form of a recommendation from the E.C. and was as follows:—

- (1) That each nominee be allowed to address the Meeting in the order as they appear on the Ballot Paper. Time allowed for speeches, 10 minutes, 5 minutes for questions.
- (2) That the selection be determined by Ballot. One delegate one vote.
- (3) On the conclusion of the first Ballot; any candidate having received more than 50 per cent. of the total valid votes cast shall be declared duly selected. In the event of a second Ballot being necessary, the candidates having a majority of votes in the first Ballot, shall proceed to the second Ballot. Any candidate receiving one-fifth—there were four nominees—of the total valid votes cast, shall not proceed to a further Ballot. These conditions shall govern a third Ballot if necessary. The candidate having a majority of votes in the final Ballot, shall be declared duly selected. If the final Ballot results in a tie, the Chairman shall give the casting vote.
- (4) That when the selection is made the following motion shall be put from the Chair:— That the South Derbyshire Divisional Labour Party herein assembled in general committee, unanimously adopt Mr. as our prospective Parliamentary Candidate, and we agree to give him all the necessary financial support, including the costs of the election whenever such occurs. (The above will be formally moved from the Chair).

A Returning Officer and scrutineers were appointed, their duties were typed out, and were read before the Conference, and proper schedules for recording the votes were carefully prepared. Means for the final declaration of the Ballot to be signed by these officials was prepared also, thus giving a seal to the importance of this part of the business, and an assurance that it was altogether fair. Ballot papers were prepared to meet all contingencies, and the whole business of the ballot was in the hands of officials appointed by the conference itself.

Visitors were allowed to the Conference, and to make sure, in addition to the register referred to, that none of these got hold of a ballot paper, they were required to give up their tickets of admission, while the delegates retained their credentials for the purpose of producing them to the scrutineers.

The success of our meeting, and the smooth running of the same, is a guarantee of all this being worth while. It proved to be a splendid send-off for our candidate.

SOUTH DERBYSHIRE DIVISIONAL LABOUR PARTY.

101 Oxford Street,
Church Gresley,
Burton-on-Trent.

Secretary and Part-time Agent,

LEWIS STRAW.

SELECTION OF PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATE.

Dear Sir,

In accordance with the rules and constitution of the Party your Society is requested to send in nominations for the position of Parliamentary Candidate.

The nominations will be submitted to a conference of representatives of all affiliated bodies, at which the selection will be made.

Each person nominated will be expected to be present at this Conference, the date of which will be Saturday, October 17th, of this year. The following conditions must be observed in respect to all nominations, viz. :—

- (1) The representative of any affiliated organisation, or the individual sections, and also the Divisional Executive Committee itself, may nominate any person for consideration as Parliamentary Candidate subject (1) to having obtained such person's consent; (2) in the case of nomination on behalf of any organisation, to

having obtained the sanction of the E.C. thereof.

- (2) The nomination must be accompanied with a financial guarantee for the expenses of the election, including the £150 deposit with the Returning Officer prior to an election.

NOTE.—Where a Local Labour Party or Polling District Committee makes a nomination (other than on behalf of an affiliated Society) and that nomination proves to be the selected Candidate, it shall be understood that the Divisional Party becomes responsible for the financial guarantee of such candidate.

- (3) Where the guarantee is made on behalf of any Trade Union it must be signed by the President and Secretary of the Trade Union, and not by Branch Officials only, although the Officials of the Branch may add their signatures if desired.

All nominations will be submitted to the affiliated bodies prior to the Conference. The nominations must be made on the form enclosed, which must reach me *not later than August 15th, 1925.*

Yours sincerely,

L. STRAW.

SOUTH DERBYSHIRE DIVISIONAL LABOUR PARTY.

SELECTION OF PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATE.

NOMINATION FORM.

We, the undersigned, hereby nominate :

(Name)

(Address)

.....

for the position of Parliamentary Candidate to the above Party.

Proposer

Seconder

Name of Affiliated Society, or Branch thereof, through which the nomination is being made :—

.....

.....

On behalf of the above Society we agree to guarantee the election expenses (including the £150 deposit with the Returning Officer), of our nominee if selected for the position of Parliamentary Candidate to the above Party.

Signed

President.

.....

Secretary.

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DURHAM COUNTY FEDERATION.

A Creditable Organisation Handbook.

Few counties we believe are so well served by their County Federation of Labour Parties as is the case in Durham County. The latest activity of this live organisation is the issue of a little booklet entitled "Organise" which is intended as a ready reference for candidates, agents, secretaries and Labour workers generally, and is priced at 6d. per copy. The booklet contains a mass of useful information for those in and outside the County, but apparently, it is specially intended as a County guide for workers engaged in Local Government Elections.

The booklet contains some useful organising notes followed by a table showing the number of electors in all the County Council Divisions of the County, 77 in number, and the price of the register for each district. This is followed by a comprehensive speakers' list for 16 out of the 17 Parliamentary Divisions in the County, together with a special list of reserved speakers who may be booked through the County Federation. Altogether no less than 347 speakers are listed.

A summary of the chief provisions of the law relating to qualifications and disqualifications for Parish Councils, Board of Guardians, Urban and Rural Councils, County and Borough Councils, is followed by further information concerning the conduct of elections for these bodies, and the law is stated very concisely in simple and

plain language. Suggestions to canvassers are to be found and hints are given on the conduct of elections. Altogether Councillor J. W. Foster, the busy secretary of the Durham Federation (also Labour Agent for Durham and Sedgfield Divisions) is to be congratulated upon producing one of the most helpful local publications of the sort which we have seen.

Readers are reminded that free copies of this booklet cannot be sent to enquirers for specimens. The sum of 6d. should be sent if a copy is required.

TO BAZAAR WORKERS.

Bazaar Secretaries and other Organisers are invited to write for price lists and samples of High-Class Perfumes, etc. Eau-de-Cologne, Lavender Water, Genuine Otto Perfumes, Sachets, Face Powders, etc. Ready Sales, substantial profits.

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